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Democrats Steal House Seat

Former Mass. State Representative Lenny Mirra gives exclusive details on how his house seat was given to his democrat opponent in a purposely flawed system that changes the rules depending on which party it favors.

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

US Navy Seabee Veteran Robert "Bob" Brown of Andover

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

US Navy Seabee Veteran and Andover resident Robert "Bob" Brown is the son of a US Military Veteran and Massachusetts firefighter. The Valley Patriot first met up with Bob Brown last year at a Chamber of Commerce function at Salvatore's in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Bob and his staff helped write this article, a story of one of many local young, American Veterans, who are starting dynamic, mission focused, locally owned businesses, employing residents of the Merrimack Valley, after serving our Nation in the US Military.

After serving our Nation in the US Navy Seabees, Bob Brown started Broco Oil in 2007 with a $25,000 SBA loan which he used to purchase an old fuel truck for $7,000, renting a parking space for $100 monthly. Banks would not approve him while he was starting out as a young entrepreneur, and he had no collateral to secure a loan. In 2023, Broco Oil has a fleet of over thirty-five trucks, fifty employees and four commercial locations.

"The Small Business Administration not only provided me a $25,000 small business loan to get Broco Oil started in 2007, but also provided me resources to assist in state and federal government contracting opportunities," said President and CEO, Bob Brown. "I am beyond grateful and humbled to be named "Veteran Owned Business of the Year" by the Small Business Administration. It's an honor to be recognized among the other amazing Veteran Owned businesses throughout the Commonwealth."

Robert "Bob" Brown began receiving counseling from Len Green at the Procurement Technical Assistance Center to prepare his business to handle the capacity required of government contractors. In 2017 a major event occurred – Broco Oil was called upon by the Federal Emergency Management Authority, (FEMA) as a prime contractor to assist in the national emergency response of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Without hesitation, Bob deployed his disaster response team to assist with the situation, earning his company recognition as a qualified small business applicant. One month after submitting his first federal contract bid, Bob and his staff, received notification that Broco Oil had been awarded a significant contract

with the Department of Defense for ground fuels in the New England and Tri State area.

In 2019, Broco Oil broke ground on a new rail-served, bio-diesel facility that significantly lowers the carbon footprint for local oil heat consumers. As a result, two old railroad switches in Haverhill, which had been dormant for over 50 years were also reactivated, providing a new opportunity for many local small businesses to cut down on

HERO: PAGE 18

Lawrence Mayor's Homeless Plan Saved Lives in Brutal Cold

Last week during the frigid -11 degree weather thaat lasted for twho days, Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena and his homeless coordinator Kelly Birchall put together a plan to help the homeless and other Lawrence residents who had no heat.

First, Mayor DePena employed the police and fire departments to visit all of the homeless encampments within the city to let people know that they were setting up warming shelters for anyone who needed it.

Then, they coordinated with local organizations and volunteers to provide food, clothing, blankets and other items to those who chose not to take advantage of the warming shelters.

For two straight days every city department was activitated to do wellness checks on those who were in the streets, nieghbors who had lost power, and event those few indivduals who were sleeping in their cars to stay warm.

It was a huge undertaking pulling together dozens of people to manage he cold crisis in a city as poor as Lawrennce.

But, Mayor DePena was on the

I'm Here to Represent Methuen and Haverhill

Ryan Hamilton
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

It has been a busy month in the 15 Essex District. My office officially submitted seven bills for this legislative session.

These bills address issues such as veteran and active-duty military benefits—mental health resources for those in our schools, and electrifying the Haverhill Commuter Rail line by the year 2030.

I want to thank those who were instrumental in helping draft these pieces of legislation—working with residents and stakeholders during the legislative process has not only been a benefit to me personally, but will also benefit the residents of Haverhill, Methuen, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

I look forward to sharing more details about the legislation my office filed in the coining months. Each month I will highlight a particular piece of legislation and how it will benefit the residents of Haverhill and Methuen.

Since my last article, I have successfully hosted two office hours at the Methuen Senior Center, where we have assisted residents with applying for assistance and had conversations regarding upcoming pieces of legislation.

I invite everyone to my upcoming office hours on February 17th and March 3rd at the Methuen Senior Center, 77 Lowell St., Methuen, from 10AM to noon.

Hearing from residents about their concerns is one of the most enjoyable parts of this job. It allows me to advocate better for all of you on Beacon Hill.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Senior Center in the coming weeks.

I am also pleased to report that I have hired a legislative aide. Emily Kibbe.

Emily brings a wealth of knowledge to the 15th Essex district. She previously worked as a legislative aide for former State Representative Tami Gouveia. Emily's knowledge of the issues and ability to assist constituents facing complex and challenging problems has made her a great addition to the team. For those looking to contact Emily, she can be reached at Emily.kibbe@mahouse.gov.

For those looking to keep up with everything happening in Methuen and Haverhill, please go to and like and follow my office State Representative Facebook Page: State Representative Ryan Hamilton.

This will be a place where residents can stay updated on everything happening on Beacon Hill and in District. Our office is committed to keeping the residents of Methuen and Haverhill updated on what we are doing. We encourage dialogue from those in our community and know that together we can continue the progress happening in Haverhill and Methuen.

It's an exciting time to be in public service; the future of Haverhill, Methuen, the Merrimack Valley, and the Commonwealth looks bright. I look forward to continuing our dialogue in the Valley Patriot. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at Ryan.hamilton@mahouse.gov if my office can serve you

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The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition, are opinion pieces.

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IN YOUR CORNER with AUDITOR DIZOGLIO

A Look Into the First Few Weeks as State Auditor

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

Last Wednesday, surrounded by family and friends, I was sworn in as your State Auditor at Methuen High School, my alma mater, where I had the opportunity to share my audit plan. As Auditor, I am excited to collaborate with communities and stakeholders to increase access, accountability, and equity for greater transparency across our state government.

Representation across Massachusetts matters. My office is committed to representing all communities. Every resident from our seniors and children to our veterans and those with disabilities deserve equitable access to programs and services. As I've shared in my audit plan, our audits will evaluate state programs, universities, agencies, and boards to properly identify and provide recommendations to address barriers to access, inefficiencies in data collection, and improper spending to avoid instances of fraud, waste, or mismanagement of funds.

I will continue to work alongside all of you to engage experts to strengthen and inform audit topics. Our goal is to ensure that audit reports are rooted in lived experiences so that our recommendations drive meaningful action.

When the term "audit" is heard, many tend to think about financial auditing, which is critical to ensuring our tax dollars are spent wisely. But the Auditor's Office also has the ability to conduct performance audits to evaluate and determine whether processes and procedures are operating to serve every resident.

By conducting performance audits, we will provide state agencies and organizations with a detailed analysis, and recommend areas to improve accessibility to information and efficiency to services for everyday working families across the Merrimack Valley.

Thank you for the incredible opportunity to continue working alongside you in this new role.

Please feel free to contact me anytime via email at auditor@sao.state.ma.us or phone at (617) 727-2075. If you're ever at the State House, I hope you'll stop by and visit our team in room 230!

Yours in service,

Diana ◊

Vilma Martinez-Dominguez to Lead Community Action Council

The long-time Executive Director & CEO of the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc., plans to retire and will be succeeded by Lawrence's Vilma Martinez-Dominguez.

Evelyn Friedman, Executive Director & CEO, has announced plans to retire in July, and the GLCAC Board of Directors has selected Martinez-Dominguez, the current Chief Operating Officer (COO), to succeed Friedman following a six-month transition period.

"The GLCAC family has been blessed to have Evelyn's leadership for the past 10 years, under which we have made tremendous strides in improving the organization and serving the community. We are forever grateful for Evelyn's dedication and commitment to serving our clients. She exemplifies the Agency's mission," said Johan Lopez, President of the Board of Directors.

Friedman plans to depart GLCAC in July, allowing for a six-month transition that will include a search for a new chief operating officer to fill the vacancy resulting from Martinez-Dominguez's promotion. While stepping down as executive director & CEO, Friedman will remain at GLCAC to oversee its community development projects.

"The promotion of Vilma to Executive Director & CEO will enable a smooth leadership transition and promote a leader from Lawrence in the top position at GLCAC. Vilma is a leader who has a great amount of experience and is eager to continue to move the organization forward and grow our reach and our programs as best suited for our clients," Lopez said.

With the recent completion of an affordable housing development at 370 Essex Street and a new Child Care Center facility on Andover Street, GLCAC is undertaking a second affordable housing project to help further meet the demand in the city. Also under Friedman's leadership, GLCAC expanded to provide low-income clients with immigration legal services, housing assistance, health insurance enrollment, financial literacy, and income tax preparation. In addition, the number of clients served annually grew from under 20,000 to more than 30,000 in the past decade.

"In the past 10 years, we have made GLCAC a force for improving lives and our community. We have strengthened our network of programs to better serve our clients. We have created affordable housing and expanded childcare opportunities – two critical needs. And just as importantly, we have built strong ties with our community partners in the non-profit and business worlds," Friedman said.

Martinez-Dominguez joined GLCAC in November 2021 after serving as the City of Lawrence's Community Development Director. She previously worked at the YWCA of Northeastern Mass. for 24 years, including seven coordinating the city's health coalition, the Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force. As COO, Martinez-Dominguez serves as the internal leader of the organization and oversees the GLCAC program directors in the day-to-day administration and operations of 17 programs.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to build on the extraordinary work that Evelyn and the board of directors have done over this past decade and lead the agency to its next phase. I remain fully committed to ensuring that GLCAC continues to offer essential and relevant resources and services that people living in the communities that we serve need in this ever-changing climate to reach their fullest potential," said Martinez-Dominguez.

GLCAC is a multi-faceted social services agency that assists nearly 33,000 individuals through a range of programs including early childhood education, fuel assistance, WIC nutrition assistance, immigration services, housing assistance, English-language classes, child abuse prevention and lead poisoning prevention. ◊

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Fighting for Working Class Families in Lawrence, Methuen, and Haverhill

Pavel Payano
STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

My first month as a state Senator has been eventful both in the district and on Beacon Hill. I have been joined by an amazing team who work diligently to help me serve the First Essex District. They assist me with everything from policy research to responding to constituents' inquiries. I am proud to have a team dedicated to delivering for this district, and look forward to what we will accomplish together this session.

In the district, I had the pleasure of recognizing a number of constituents who are making a positive impact in the community. I had the opportunity to celebrate the 100th birthday of WWII Veteran and Lawrence business owner Sebastiano Messina.

It was an honor to present him with a Senate citation - my first as a Senator. I was able to meet with Adolfo Burgos of Lawrence, whose selfless actions saved the life of a woman who fell unconscious while driving on the highway.

In Haverhill, we recognized Fermin De La Cruz, a community activist for his work during the COVID Pandemic, and Tomas Michael Skarbek, who, at 13 years old, achieved the Eagle Scout recognition.

I also had the opportunity to join the Methuen delegation and Mayor Perry in recognizing the brave men and women of the Methuen Police and Fire Departments at Enterprise Bank's First Responder Breakfast. All of these individuals represent the very best of our district, and I am excited to continue meeting more constituents making a difference in the community.

On Beacon Hill, we kicked off the legislative session by calling on the Department of Public Utilities to reassess the recently approved winter energy rates. In a letter signed by legislators from across the state, members expressed concerns about the sky-high electricity and gas prices.

Winter utility bills have doubled, if not tripled, and with the rising costs of goods and services, I am concerned about the financial well-being of the most vulnerable members of our community. We are also working with both Mayor Perry and Lawrence Mayor De Pena on local Municipal Aggregation Plans, which, if approved by DPU, will result in real savings for consumers. I will continue to push DPU to seek both short and long-term solutions to help customers afford their energy bills.

The legislature's bill filing deadline was set for January 20th. In the two and a half weeks leading up to the deadline, my staff and I met with advocates, local organizations, city officials, and constituents to discuss their priorities. All told, I filed 21 bills, ranging from lowering auto insurance premiums to supporting our community health centers.

Each of these pieces of legislation is meant to ensure that the First Essex is a better place to live, work, and learn for all. With the filing deadline behind us, we are in the next stage of the legislative cycle: co-sponsorships. My staff and I are in the process of reviewing requests from advocates and constituents alike.

As we finalize our co-sponsorships, the interests and needs of the First Essex District remain at the forefront. I encourage you to contact my office with any questions or priorities you want to share with me.

It's been a great first month representing the people of Haverhill, Lawrence, and Methuen. Please be on the lookout for information on office hours on my social media platforms, and please contact my office if you'd like to speak with my team.

You can contact my office via phone or email: Pavel.Payano@masenate.gov or (617) 722-1604. ◊

Mayor DePeña Thanks Local Hero Adolfo D. Molina Burgos

Lawrence Mayor Brian A. DePeña says he had the pleasure to have Mr. Adolfo D. Molina Burgos in his office last week, along with State Representatives, City Council Members, LPD Chief, Fire Dept. Chief and other Delegations. The mayor recognized Burgos for his courageous act of saving the life of a fellow citizen who had passed out while she was driving on the highway a few days ago.

Adolfo D. Molina Burgos, who visited the office of Mayor Brian A. DePeña along with his family, (all Lawrence residents), told Mayor DePeña that he's proud of being able to save the life of the person who was driving, even having to risk his own life.

Mr. Adolfo still does not know the situation of the person who was driving, and says he hopes to meet her and share a big hug with her.

D/uring this meeting, Mayor DePeña said that he was proud to know Adolfo and his entire family and to know that we have good people in the city of Lawrence.

"I feel lucky to meet you, my staff had shown me the video where you are trying to help the person driving on the highway, and I know that your parents have educated you to be a good man in our society, thank you for doing the right thing," said Mayor DePeña.

El alcalde Brian A. DePeña recibe en su oficina junto a representantes Estatales, Concejales, Jefe de la Policía, Jefe de los Bomberos y otras Delegaciones al héroe Adolfo D. Molina Burgos para ser reconocido por su gesto humanitario por haberle salvado la vida a una conciudadana quien en días pasados se había desmayado mientras estaba conduciendo en la autopista 93.

Adolfo D. Molina Burgos, quien visitó la oficina del alcalde Brian A. DePeña junto a su esposa, sus hijos y su madre todos residentes de Lawrence, manifestó a DePeña que se siente orgulloso de haber podido salvarle la vida a la persona que estaba conduciendo, aún teniendo que arriesgar su propia vida. A la fecha, Adolfo no sabe cuál es la situación de la persona que estaba conduciendo y espera poder conocerla y compartir entre ellos un fuerte abrazo. El alcalde DePeña en este encuentro manifestó a todos los presentes que se siente orgulloso de conocer a Adolfo y a toda su familia y de saber que tenemos buenos samaritanos en la ciudad de Lawrence.

Me siento contento de conocerte, me habían mostrado el video donde sales tratanto de socorrer a la persona en la autopista, y sé que tus padres te han educado para que seas un hombre de bien en nuestra sociedad, gracias por haber hecho lo correcto"-expresó el alcalde DePeña. ◊

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MA Democrats Steal House Seat

A close race, a recount, a court challenge and legilsative action, resulted in the 1st Essex District State Rep. Lenny Mirra (Georgetown) winning his reelection by 100 votes then losing by one vote. Mirra appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast last week (iTunes, iHeartRadio, YouTube, PodBean) to give us the exclusive on how the entire apparatus of the Massachusetts Democrat Party got innvolved in his race and flipped a house seat from republican to democrat.

"On election night we won by 100 votes," Lenny Mirra explained at the Studio 21 podcast Cafe in Salem NH.

"I wouldn't say it's voter fraud, but it's human error and political maneuvering more than anything else."

"So, we won this election by 100 votes, and it was really close, this was out of more than 24,000 votes cast.

We felt pretty good about this election. But, under the current rules we have, we had to wait for all the mail-in ballots to come in. And weeks after the election they were still coming in. As long as you have it postmarked by Election-Day it counts, even if it comes in a week or two later it still counts."

"Now, this is a problem for a few reasons; it's very easy to pre-date or postdate an empty envelope in an office somewhere with a postal stamp meter. And we raised those objections but no one wants to hear it."

"I wanted to give this story to the Valley Patriot because the rest of the media missed this story entirely," said former State Rep. Lenny Mirra.

BALLOTS WITH NO CHAIN OF CUSTODY

"There was a chain of custody issue in Ipswich where a lot of mail-in ballots were put in a box that… It's supposed to be only in a box that the town clerk has a key to. But these ended up in a box that everyone had a key to, It's the box you put your water bill or excise tax bill into. So, half the people in city hall had access to it."

"But, that really wasn't the big problem. The big problem was that these ballots started coming in a week after the election. In the other towns the mail in ballots ran pretty much the same, except for Ipswich."

"They had more mail-in ballots in Ipswich then all the other towns combined, about 110 of them. I went to the opening of these ballots and almost all of them went to my appointment. So, my hundred vote lead went down to 10. I thought, how do you do that?"

MAIL-IN BALLOTS ARE NOT SECURE

"What they do is, they send an absentee ballot application to every single person on the voting list in the state, and we know that those lists are highly inaccurate, people move, people die, whatever. But, we just send these applications out to everyone on the list anyway. When I moved from West Newbury to Georgetown, I live alone, and I got three ballots; mine, plus the two people who used to live there before me. If the people in town hall didn't know me, I could have voted three times."

"The process is; they (election workers) are supposed to look at the mail-in applications to make sure that you signed your application, and then they will send you a ballot in the mail. Then, when you fill out your ballot, you sign the envelope and mail it back in."

BALLOTS: PAGE 14

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EYE ON DRACUT

Conflict of Interest Torpedoes Thibault in Dracut

By Brian Genest
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

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Breaking a Bad Habit

Philippe Thibault
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Did you ever take a Myers Briggs Personality Test? I have been intrigued by the sixteen personality types and the associations of one type working with another. It would be amusing to have the Dracut Board of Selectmen fill out the survey and see what dynamics are at work between the members. There is also a portion of the test that relates to how persons work in relaxed situations and under stress.

While most people believe they have similar reactions in both instances, most people diverge greatly. I believe this portion of the exam would find that the Dracut Board of Selectmen Chair Alison Genest would be consistently inconsistent. Consistency is derived from habit and Alison Genest has many bad habits.

Genest's first test came shortly after being elected to office. The Town of Dracut has three appointments to the Dracut Access Board of Directors, one of which is by the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen appointed position became vacant with the resignation of that Director. The procedure to make appointments by the Town require posting the position for a 10-day period, interview all potential applicants and then appoint. These procedures are actually "habits" the Town institute to promote consistency. Genest's husband was appointed less than 48 hours after the resignation. It was never posted. Selectman DiRocco thought that a social media post on someone's personal Facebook page should suffice as adequate notification to the public of the position's availability. The seconding of your spouse's nomination let alone voting on the appointment would be the start of Genest's bad habit of ignoring procedure and ethics.

A campaign issue for Genest in her first race was Beaver Brook Farm and the Conservation Commission. Dracut undertook work to construct a wood bridge over Beaver Brook to connect the Farm and the School complex. Prior to her election, Genest was contacted as an abutter to the project with her residence less than three hundred feet from the property. When elected she formed the Beaver Brook Ad Hoc Committee. Genest took the Chair position as a nice plum, leaving some wondering how this was ethical. Genest claims to have spoken to the Massachusetts Ethics Commission. I will only reflect on the words of Benjamin Franklin that "half the truth is often a great lie." She supplied the Town Clerk a Disclosure Form where she claims not to be an abutter; even when the Dracut Conservation Commission, under Massachusetts General Law, considers her an abutter. Genest's bad habit of ignoring facts and ethics again.

Setting goals has always been a way for breaking bad habits. The Selectmen have been setting goals for some time, typically sharing them in open session. An effective communication practice and a way fostering camaraderie among members. Genest's habits are a stubborn thing though, as Chair of the Board of Selectmen, she required all goals be sent to her directly. She them culled through the goals she wanted and discarded those she did not. The adoption of a Code of Conduct was a goal by two Selectman, but Genest would not be deterred by paper handcuffs. The code when brought up in open session was shot down. Another goal was that of no new taxes and fees. Genest did not need time to sleep on a fee to pick up mattresses with the Town's rubbish collection. Her answer was: Town Manager, Ann Vandal, needed the money and she did not want to pay for someone's expense. She now supports an ala carte government. If you do not drive at night, you will not have to pay for streetlights?

An appointment for the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee was made recently by the Selectmen after a considerable amount of turmoil also caused by a few Selectmen, Genest included. The procedures called for the Selectmen making an appointment with the recommendations of the Zoning Bylaw Committee. Well, the Zoning Bylaw Committee fulfilled their duties and made a unanimous recommendation to the Selectman for their choice of applicants, but Genest has her bad habits to satisfy. "This is our appointment" she pontificated as she and her two cohorts twisted facts and cast aspersions to make a candidate look undesirable. In violation of Selectmen procedures, she did not even arrange for an interview. That would only expose her charade.

The bad habits of ignoring procedures and ethics just keep piling up like a train wreck: suspending Selectman rules in session required by a supermajority vote is done by simple majority; nomination residency requirements discarded to allow out of town nominations; increased committee membership to permit a friend's appointment without charter change; requirement of resumes to be included with applications to volunteer on Selectmen appointed boards without consensus of the Board of Selectmen; she regularly weaponizes the Open Meeting Law to shut down discussion when the conversation gets away from her side; hypocritically she chastises others for seeking advice from the State Ethics Commission while she wears the same as a badge of honor. If Genest cannot break her own bad habits, then Dracut should break them for her and not reelect Genest. ◊

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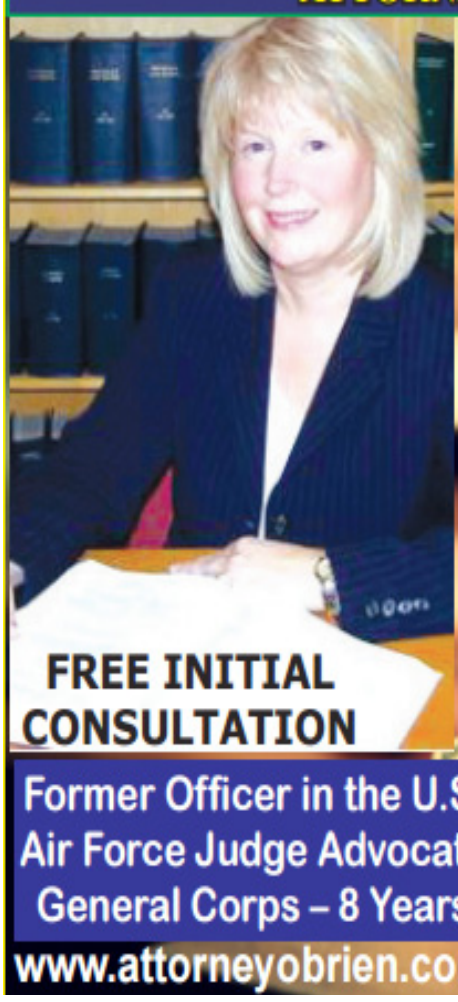

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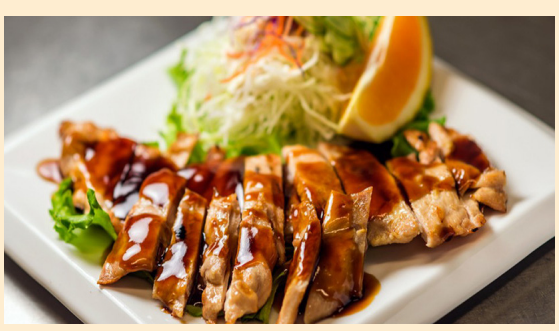

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Conservatives Fight for America's Future

Ken Willette
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As a constitutional-minded conservative, I often assert that if an action is currently illegal, it must remain illegal---- regardless of the celebrity outcry or the use of trendy language manipulated to excuse that activity. Therefore, it is categorically wrong to argue that illegal aliens are merely undocumented immigrants.

For example, many of these immigrants are not officially on company payrolls (undocumented) but are paid under the table. Many Americans, and hopefully most liberals, would say that tax evasion should be severely punished. Let's not apply window-dressing to an escalating problem costing our nation hundreds of billions of dollars, exhausting state and municipal resources and directly causing hundreds of preventable deaths. Let's not discourage law-abiding job seekers and dilute wages because a shady employer can forgo paying taxes and hypothetically abuse and lowball an unaccounted worker.

Granting an illegal alien a Massachusetts driver's license is not a solution either, because over 500,000 companies nationwide routinely utilize E-Verify to purge illegal aliens from any job consideration. E-Verify has been a key tool to prevent Social Security fraud and other government assistance misuse.

The media doomsayers, in their ivy towers, proclaim that since conservatives oppose illegal entry into our country, we must automatically reject all forms of immigration. This is a blatant parlor trick of the Leftist media--- "You must hate all immigrants". I love living in the most diversified and multicultural society on the planet. Contrary to what CNN and MSNBC spew, we accept more refugees than any other nation. We have the most robust foreign and humanitarian aid programs (over $50 billion annually), that leave any other nation in the dust.

Sadly, our nation and individual states have passed morally questionable laws over the centuries, including slavery enforcement acts, prohibitions against interracial marriages and outright discrimination against certain immigrant groups. The genius of our constitutional republic is the amendment process designed to address past transgressions and wrongs. However, there has never been a moral imperative to empower millions of illegal aliens, bypass legal pathways to citizenship and grant direct amnesty. Any such legislative effort has been proven to be an unmitigated disaster on an epic scale.

In my estimation, President Reagan's greatest policy mistake was agreeing to an amnesty law in 1986. Leaders, pushing for amnesty at the time, pledged that swift congressional recourse would reduce future illegal border entries. In fact, amnesty opened the floodgates of illegal aliens and created a multigenerational crisis. Anyone who has studied this decades-long trend didn't have to read the NY Times editorial to wake up to the public policy aftermath manifesting at our Southern borders. Based on reputable academic studies and formulas, illegal immigration has worsened at least fivefold, and both parties share the blame.

Name me another nation that would tolerate the continued presence of someone living there illegally. Or becoming a hopeless client of the welfare system. Or worse, committing heinous crimes. Why should we be any different? There is a fine line between being charitable and being a patsy.

Conservatives can offer real solutions to immigration reform and correct the misguided legacy of 1986. For example, we must affirm that anyone seeking a pathway to citizenship, even for those here illegally and operating in the shadows, must comply with English proficiency, possess clean criminal records exclusive of immigration violations, and adhere to our Constitution. Illegals must perform community service hours, pay fines and check in with immigration officials on a regular basis.

We must also promote fast track legislation to encourage interviews and citizenship applications with foreign students at our prestigious higher education institutions who excel in math, science, medicine and engineering. It is foolhardy for our nation to educate millions of foreign students but not officially approach them about the possibility of becoming U.S. citizens. We should seek innovative and talented people who have learned English or who are eager to acquire our nation's official language. We must actively replenish our aging population from those qualified candidates with 21st century skills and those who have obeyed the laws of their host country.

We must streamline the existing backlog of legal immigration applications. They deserve an expedited solution and not endless delays. Special status for those who served our military honorably should also be included in any comprehensive package.

Our nation still represents a shining beacon of hope, innovation and forward-thinking. Let's not cloud that future by condoning millions of illegals crashing our border security, coming in as unsubstantiated refugees or overstaying their visas. Legal immigration can still be America's lifeblood to a beautiful tomorrow, but we must act decisively now.

Run For the Troops 5K Helping those who Served!

Each year, Run for The Troops 5K, holds a 5K Walk/Run and a community Dinner & Silent Auction to honor our veterans. In addition to funds these events raise awareness of the needs of our soldiers. The public often forgets the hard human cost for a few to maintain freedom for us all.

In addition to raising funds to benefit Homes For Our Troops, our mission has expanded to support veteran services provided by Challenge Unlimited at Ironstone Farm, and Homeland Heroes Foundation.

With support from our community, generous race and dinner sponsorship and silent auction donors, we want to thank everyone who has helped support this mission and brought us to this – our 10th year.

About the Charities

Your entry fees and support from our sponsors allow us to run our great events and support our beneficiaries and all the great work they do for veterans.

Homeland Heroes Foundation

The Homeland Heroes Foundation is committed to the re-acclimation support of active duty service members, veterans and their families in their time of need. HHF provides support in the following ways; Furniture and Household items, New Beds, Temporary hotel stays for homeless veterans, Food and Gas Cards, Holiday Food Baskets, Christmas Toy Drive and so much more. Please stand with us to support our most deserving veterans.

Challenge Unlimited at Ironstone Farm

Since 1983, Challenge Unlimited at Ironstone Farm has been helping children and adults find hope and healing through equine-assisted therapeutic programs. It serves people with a wide range of physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities, uniting a diverse population in an environment that encourages joy, well-being, and improved quality of life.

Homes For Our Troops

Homes For Our Troops (HFOT) is a privately funded 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that builds and donates specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post – 9/11 Veterans, to enable them to rebuild their lives. Most of these Veterans have sustained injuries including multiple limb amputations, partial or full paralysis, and/or severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). These homes restore some of the freedom and independence our Veterans sacrificed while defending our country, and enable them to focus on their family, recovery, and rebuilding their lives. Since its inception in 2004, nearly 90 cents of every dollar has gone directly to our program services for Veterans. HFOT builds these homes where the Veteran chooses to live, and continues its relationship with the Veterans after home delivery to assist them with rebuilding their lives.

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Run for the Troops MA, D.B.A. Run for the Troops 5K, is a tax exempt 501c(3) not-for-profit corporation located in Andover, MA. This organization was initially formed to help Homes For Our Troops build and donate specially adapted custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans. You can visit us on line at runforthetroops5K.com

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KANE'S KORNER

Critical Role of Peer Support For First Responders

KANE
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST

Joe Rizzuti, an active member of the Certified Peer Support Specialist Team serving police officers and first responders in Massachusetts, took the time to sit down with Kane to provide information on the history and development of the rise of peer support networks throughout the Commonwealth. Support comes in many forms, including critical incident support, education, one on one support, and residential care. Certified Peer Support Specialists are often the bridge between the first responder and the services needed including one of the most important form of support, a listening ear "that gets it."

Kane believes first responders deserve our upmost respect as they venture out into the unknown to provide safety and support to our citizens. Although this type of work may be rewarding, the stress these men and woman are under is palpable. Encouraging community caretakers to prioritize their own mental health has been a taboo subject over the years. Basically many first responders in their course of their duties may have normal reactions to the abnormal events they are exposed to daily.

Peer support specialists are former or current members of their first responder community that support their fellow professionals through the stresses and emotions associated with seeing a lot of tragedy, navigating work life balance, and the politics of these positions. For example Joe Rizzuti was on the job with the Revere Police Department and prides himself in assisting members of the law enforcement community experiencing job stress. Kane recognizes that people like Joe truly live a life of service to others.

Kane asked what exactly is a Peer Support Specialist? According to Wikipedia, "a peer support specialist is a person with "lived experience" who has been trained to support those who struggle with mental health, psychological trauma, or substance use." Their personal on the job experience provides peer support specialists with expertise that professional training cannot replicate. Kane and Joe talked in detail about how first responders feel most comfortable talking with first responders about the normal challenges of the job as well as how it effects their personal life. Peers with lived experience are able to relate to their experience in a different way than professionals not on their job. Of course it is very beneficial for a first responder, peer specialist, and Licensed clinician to work collaboratively to provide support and resources when mental health is concerned, but collaboration is key. In fact in 2007, the Department of Health and Human Services recognized peer support services as an evidence-based practice

Examples of stress may include the death of a child, responding to a car accident where people your age or the age of your children are killed. Many first responders do not want to discuss these situations with their family since they do not wish to upset them or maybe friends not on the job would not understand. Either way sitting alone with these thoughts can be lonely and leads to acute stress symptoms and feeling alone. Observing and being involved in traumatic events may also be the cause of Post-Traumatic Stress. Symptoms such as insomnia, hyper vigilance, and irritability are normal reactions to these events, however, many first responders don't discuss these symptoms in fear of being considered unstable. Normalizing these reactions in a collaborative way has a great benefit to the first responder. Kane thought about how much he values talking to others with like experiences; there is a solid connection that is hard to find or replicate.

Joe explained to Kane that the Merrimack Valley was truly blessed to have pioneers doing peer support work well before it was an organized vocational career. He credited both Michael Miles and Tom Fleming both former officers of the Lowell Police Department for their tired-less efforts supporting officers through critical incidents and other challenges of the job. In fact Michael Miles has worked as a professional counselor for years assisting first responders throughout the Merrimack Valley. This was all happening in 1988. Another well-known Pioneer.Ed Donovan from the Boston Police Department. was well known for discussing critical incidents and developing stress teams.

Kane learned that Joe Rizzuti also worked one day a week at the On-Site Academy which is a short term, intensive residential treatment center for rescue personnel who may be temporarily overwhelmed by the stress of their job, suffering from work-related cumulative or delayed critical incident stress, or experiencing an acute, transient reaction to an incident. The goal of the On-Site Academy (onsiteacedemy.org) is to lessen the impact of the event or events, and to accelerate recovery. Available on a continuous basis, the On-Site Academy is dedicated to maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of rescue personnel and their families, and to helping restore them to service in their chosen field, as soon as they are able. onsite-ggi@onsiteacademy.org

Kane would like all first responders to feel supported in their profession and have the resources needed to feel appreciated, valued, and understood. To those of you who serve in the military, law enforcement, fire department, dispatch and EMT, we salute you and please know it is healthy and normal to reach out for support. If you would like the support of a Certified Peer Specialist please reach out to the Massachusetts State Peer Support Network (MPSN) through MEMA at 508-820-2000. For information on the On-Site Academy, please call 978-874-0177. Remember we see you and appreciate you.

Best Regards
Kane Peaslee, Woof ◊

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BALLOTS: FROM PAGE 7

"The Town Clerk then opens the ballot, and is supposed to look at the signature on the envelope to make sure it matches the signature on the application."

How'd that go?

"So, I said I wanted to see just the late arriving ballots from Ipswich, maybe about 110 of them, In over a dozen of them the signatures weren't even close. They did not match at all."

"But they said it was too late because once you open the ballots they get lumped in with all the others, you can't separate those."

MYSTERY BALLOTS APPEAR OUT OF THIN AIR

"It gets worse."

"My one hundred vote lead went down to 10 votes. Then, my opponent asked for a recount. Now, in my lifetime I've never seen a recount flip more than one or two votes - but this one went South really fast."

"The first thing they do is they run all the ballots through the machine to make sure that you get the same number of ballots during the recount that you had during the election."

"But guess what? In Ipswich they found, somehow, 14 extra ballots. Nobody can figure out where these came from. Were they late? Were they overseas ballots? Were they mail in ballots? There was no chain of custody for these ballots."

How did they get away with this?

"They get away with this because the Democrats have way better lawyers than Republicans do. In the recounts for all the other communities except for Ipswich the election came out almost exactly the same, but they had flipped one vote, so my lead went from 10 to 9.

FLIPPING VOTES AND CHANGING THE RULES

"We still felt pretty good about the fact that we were going to win this. But, the Democrat lawyer found a way to flip five votes in a switch from me to my opponent. And they changed the rules based on who the ballots were for. So, for example, when there was a scribble in my opponent's oval on the ballot and it was contested, the Democrat lawyer said no, no, you have to give that to the Democrat Kristene Casner."

"But, then there were two ballots that had the same thing, where they had scribbled on my oval on the ballot. They found a way to convince the Board of Registrars to not count those for me."

"And it was just minutes later, after they had just used the exact opposite argument for my Democrat opponent, and now suddenly they didn't want that standard to apply to me."

"And that's shenanigans if you ask me, because those two ballots were initially called by the Board of Registrars for me and those people at the table are the trained election workers, they are the experts and they called them for Mirra. But this lawyer for the Democrat party somehow convinced the board of registrars, at least two of the three (who were democrats) to flip those votes from Mirra, to blank votes."

"So, those got put aside."

CORRECTING BALLOTS?

"At the Same time in Rowley, they went through the whole recount and it didn't change much until the very end when some lady by the name of Trudy Reed, was somehow deputized into running that recount, I don't know how or why because she's from North Andover. But she and the Democrat lawyers convinced the board of registrars to un-spoil five ballots."

CURING BALLOTS

"What that means is that in the old days, if you didn't sign your mail in ballot or absentee ballot, it didn't count. If you didn't put the date on it, it didn't count. If it came in late, it didn't count. But, now we have this new system where they can take ballots that don't count for those reasons, they call up the voter - supposedly - and ask them to come down and either sign the ballot or date it or correctly, whatever it was that was wrong. Then suddenly that vote counts. So, at the end of the day I end up losing by one vote."

SO, WHAT DID THE COURTS SAY?

"We were down by one vote, so we filed in Essex County Superior Court and ended up in front of Judge Drechsler. Now, just an indication of how so-few people understand election law - we went in with this complaint saying these ballots were ruled in appropriately, and he scolded us! He said we came in with a complaint and we didn't have any evidence."

"He said, "where are these ballots?"

"And we had to inform him, a judge, that we're not allowed to have these ballots. The law says that only the clerks can handle the ballots. And he said, 'well, you can at least give me a copy of the ballots.' And we had to inform him again, the law prohibits us from even making copies of the ballots. We can't even take a picture of the ballots with our phone. So, the judge didn't even know that. He was kind of angry and he ordered the Town Clerks to give him those ballots, he said 'I want them in my court tomorrow morning so I can inspect them.'"

LEGAL MENUEVERING

"They had to have a police escort for these ballots so nobody would mess with them. They deliver them all the way to court, and once again, this attorney for the Democrats convinced that judge that he couldn't open the ballots because it was not his jurisdiction. So, my lawyers said 'wait a minute' we just talked to the attorney general and they said it is your jurisdiction.

The Democrats said, 'no, it's the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives, it's their soul jurisdiction and the judge caved. Then the SJC, the State's Supreme Judicial Court said the same thing. They said it is the sole jurisdiction of the House of Representatives according to our state constitution.

We said OK we don't like this but we except it it's in the constitution.

DEMMCRATS IN THE LEGISLATURE VOTE FOR THEMSELVES

House speaker Mariano, said 'we're not going to seat anyone in this race.' He put together a special house committee, and those three people, two democrats and one republican are going to determine who the actual winners of this race is.

After 2 1/2 weeks they finally came out with a report saying, 'no, we're not going to look at these contested ballots.' Somehow, the lawyer for the Democrats had convinced two judges and then this committee to not open these ballots. They acted like it was life or death if anybody ever opened and looked at those ballots.

So, Brad Jones (minority leader) submitted a bill last week H-53 that said we need a committee to just look at these ballots, even if they did it after giving my opponent this race. I'd be OK with that. I just want to fix the system, so we can see the flaws and correct them. It went to a vote before the full house and they voted straight on party lines.

Every Republican voted for H- 53 to look at these ballots. And only one Democrat, Russell Homes from Boston - who deserves a profile in courage award - because he's the only Democrat to stand up to leader ship and voted with us to say, "yes we need to look at these ballots. Just look at them and look at the signatures."

COVERING UP THE COVER UP

"Now, those signatures and those ballots will be sealed for 22 months and then destroyed."

"Which means the public will never see those contested ballots. We will never know who actually won this race."

"We argued that if I was a Democrat and this was the other way around they would be making the exact opposite argument, and we can prove it because they've already done that. If my Democrat opponent was down by one vote, does anybody really believe that that committee of Democrats would've voted the same way? There's just no way. They would've opened everything and inspected everything."

"And I've already conceded. I don't want to be one of these stolen election people - although I'm probably the only person on earth that has a legitimate claim to it. I'm just saying, I've conceded. Let her have the seat. But, for the sake of our elections and for the sake of the integrity of our elections, we should look at these ballots. Let's just fix the flaws in our system so the public knows what happened."

"But they don't want to fix the flaws in the system."

"The problem is, we are a one-party state and they don't even need my seat. They have a super-majority. What they want is ultimate one-party rule, absolutely. And I'm in RINO, and I'm proud of it. I readily admit it. But I don't have a D next to my name."

ONE PARTY RULE

"As long as the voters put up with it, this is what's going to keep happening. The voters have to, at some point, say 'enough is enough'. You look at California and you look at New York, people are leaving there by the millions. There's a reason why people are leaving. The same thing is going to happen in Massachusetts, and you're already starting to see it now."

"I want laws put in place to make sure different branches of government are providing checks and balances - and it goes from the executive branch, to the Secretary of State's Office - who runs the election. But, if you have an issue you're supposed to go to the courts and sue. That's the judicial branch, and then failing that, it's supposed to come back to the legislature to the House or the Senate, but it's totally corrupted now from top to bottom."

"Once again, it's all one party. So, this lawyer for the Democrats is arguing before the Democrats, and how are they going to rule?

They're going to run for the Democrats.

SITUATIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS

We have this situational ethics in democrat politics today and it's destroying every part of our system. Let me give you an example. What's the procedure in Massachusetts if a US senator leaves office. Who replaces them? Do we have an election or does the governor pick a replacement?

Well, of course it depends on your party affiliation. When Romney was the governor Kerry left to become Secretary of State and the democrats said 'Oh, no, we can't have the governor appoint a replacement we need an election.' Then a few years later, Devon Patrick is the governor, and we had to replace a senator and the democrats said 'no, no, we have to have the governor pick the replacement.' It's so blatant it's ridiculous, they don't even try to hide it, they have no shame.

More than anything else I blame the media. The media is made up entirely of one party. Every newspaper has writers that are all Democrats. They are not writing news they are cheerleading for the democrats. Yours is the only one. The Valley Patriot is the only newspaper in the state that represents both parties fairly. That gives us a chance to hear all sides to a story and make up our own mind. Can you name any other paper that does that? Because I can't.

But, I want to be clear. I don't want people to think that my election was stolen, or that there was massive fraud. I don't want anyone to think that the machines were hacked, or altered at all. In fact the machines were spot on they were deadly accurate. According to the machines I won. But it was these recounts where human error and manipulation comes in to play, and that's where the election changed. That's where mistakes were made.

All I was asking for is some transparency even if they do it now. I've conceded the election, so let my opponent have the seat, I don't care. But, let's at least look at those ballots, open them up and do the right thing. And they won't do it. And they're going to bury that evidence to make sure no one ever sees it. And that's absolutely unreasonable.

"But I want to be clear, I don't want people to think that my election was stolen, or that there was massive fraud. I don't want anyone to think that the machines were hacked, or altered at all... But it was these recounts where human error and manipulation comes in to play and that's where the election changed. That's where mistakes were made."

~ former State Rep. Lenny Mirra

slkrgirhgpisihg'iaghhhhhhhr

Estela Reyes
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/METHUEN

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What We Need is Real Equity in Our Schools

Francisco Paulino
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/METHUEN

As a state representative, I am deeply dedicated to fighting for equity in my community. Equity is not just about treating everyone the same, but it is about addressing the systemic barriers and inequalities that prevent certain groups from having the same opportunities for success.

The difference between equality and equity is that equality aims to give everyone the same resources and opportunities, regardless of their needs or circumstances. But, this approach doesn't always result in equal outcomes. Equity, on the other hand, seeks to level the playing field by giving people what they need to overcome any barriers they may face.

In the Merrimack Valley, we have a problem that more than half of the high school graduates from Lawrence and Methuen do not pursue a college degree.

The only education they have is a high school diploma, which lacks computer science and financial education. This is unacceptable and limits their future prospects and opportunities.

That's why, as a state representative, I am working with public school officials to create and enhance early college classes, vocational programs, and apprenticeships. I believe that by providing these resources, we can give our young people the skills they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing job market.

My goal is to give every member of our community a real chance to succeed. The Merrimack Valley is a mine of talent, and it's our responsibility to tap into that potential. By investing in education and skills development, we can help our residents reach their full potential and contribute to the growth and prosperity of our community.

In conclusion, I believe that equity is critical to creating a fair and just society, and I am committed to using my role as a state representative to work towards

that goal. I will continue to work with my colleagues, educators, and members of the community to ensure that every resident has the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. Together, we can build a brighter future for our community.

As always, you can email your ideas and concerns at franciscopaulino9@gmail.com

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BASH SCHOLARSHIP

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

Yanelyn Quintana of Haverhill was crowned last month the Miss Massachusetts Teen USA. Yanelyn's win breaks a 66-year drought for Haverhill. Haverhill's Sandra Ramsey-Sterling last captured the Miss Massachusetts USA title in 1957.

WINSTON SAYS!

This year's BASH! Is Friday, March 31st at the Relief's IN 1 Market St. in Lawrence!

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NEXT PAGE

NOTEBOOK CONTINUED

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WEATHER 101 with AL KAPRIELIAN

The Last Full Month of Winter

Welcome to February and the last full month of the winter season. During February the days will continue to get longer with sunsets occurring after 5PM.

The sunrises will be getting earlier. Snowstorms can occur in February and even the month is known for blizzards. The blizzard of 1978 occurred 45 years ago this month. When the blizzard occurred I was a junior in high school. The snow was so deep that people were stuck on the off ramps of the highways. Because the snow was so deep front end loaders were needed to remove the snow from the off ramps. The blizzard of 1978 will remain a memorable winter storm.

People went to work that day as the weather forecast was way under done on the snow amounts. The Limited Fine Mesh model did not show the low pressure system stalling in the Atlantic Ocean.

After the blizzard the LFM model was eliminated due to its poor performance in the way it handled the storm. During the month of February the sun angle will continue to get higher.

By the later part of the month any snow on the ground will melt faster due to the higher sun angle. The daily high temperatures will rise by month's end. Arctic air from Canada can still move down into our area during February. Recapping January it did not meet its reputation as being the coldest month of the year. January 2023 will go down as the 5th warmest January in Boston. It was the 4th warmest January in Concord, New Hampshire.

Why was there no arctic air in January? The answer is the jet stream and how it tracked. As January began, the jet stream was moving west to east across the country and was bringing mild Pacific air all the way to the east coast including New England. With the track of this jet stream it was not allowing the arctic air up in Canada from moving down into the United States. This jet stream coming off the Pacific Ocean was bringing intense low pressure systems, one after another onto the west coast.

These low pressure systems brought heavy rain and strong winds to California and much of the west coast. The heavy rains caused massive flooding and also mudslides. The strong winds caused numerous power outages due to downed trees and power lines. After California and the west coast these low pressure systems moved across the country and tracked either over or to the west of southern New England. These tracks are not favorable to bring lots of snow to southern New England. In order to get a lot of snow for southern New England, the low pressures have to track south and southeast of Cape Cod and the Islands.

With this track we would be on the west/northwest side of the low pressure which is the colder side resulting in more snow versus rain. The low pressure systems that tracked over southern New England did cause several inches of snow in the ski areas of northern & western New England. Also accumulating snow occurred over Southern Vermont and Southern New Hampshire. On Monday January 23rd these areas mentioned got several inches of heavy wet pasty snow. The snow was not dry and fluffy due to the absence of artic air. The heavy wet pasty snow stuck to trees and power lines causing them to fall due to the weight of the snow.

Numerous power outages occurred in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. Also power outages occurred in western Massachusetts and towns in Northern Worcester county. Due to the number of power outages, electrical crews were brought in from other states to help make the restoration process go faster. Normally in past years we would get the dry and fluffy snow which does not stick to trees and power lines meaning power outages are not a big issue. This past January was different in the snow texture due to the absence of arctic air.

For Boston most of January temperatures averaged above normal with the exception of one or two days. Much of New England had above normal temperatures for January. Many days featured high temperatures in the 40s and 50s. With this warm weather some people wore tee-shirts and shorts in place of winter coats. Tee-shirts and shorts in January in wintertime is quite abnormal. Just wanted to mention that the low pressure system of January 23rd brought heavy rain and flooding to areas south and southeast of Boston, including Cape Cod.

This same storm caused the rain to change to wet snow north & west of Boston as the low pressure moved to the east/northeast of New England. Colder air wrapped in behind the storm. MetroWest saw three to five inches of wet snow with some 6 inch amounts in some places. Lowell and Waltham got 6 inches. The south shore of Boston had lesser amounts of wet snow.

The last day of January did feature some colder air. Will February turn out to be colder & snowier than January?? Will February be another mild month like January? Stay tuned to next month's article for these answers. In the meantime enjoy the winter season and stay safe! ◊

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

emissions and freight costs. This has opened new business activities within an SBA HUBZone, spurring new economic development activity in the Haverhill area.

"As a U.S. Navy Seabee veteran, Mr. Brown gained an understanding of the unique constraints involved with emergency response and large constructions jobs," said SBA Massachusetts District Director, Robert Nelson. "We congratulate Mr. Brown for taking his military experience and turning it into a successful business that is supporting other veterans and the local community."

Broco Oil earned the recognition of the 2019 Veteran Small Business Owner of the Year for Massachusetts for successfully expanding as a government contractor with designations as a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). Broco Oil sells and distributes petroleum products to an active clientele of over 15,000 commercial and residential accounts in the Greater Boston area. Brown is a member of NEFI, MEMA, and the North Shore Oil Heat Association. He also enjoys mentoring other veterans and working as a Fire Captain at his local firehouse.

The U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo Memorial Award was presented on Veteran's Day, November 11th 2021, to U.S. Navy Seabee veteran Robert Brown, owner of Haverhill's Broco Oil. From the entire staff of the Valley Patriot, a very special thank you to Bob, and the employees of Broco Oil for their assistance in writing this article, especially Beth Downey of Broco Oil.

Firefighter, Veteran, Small Businessman, husband and father, Bob Brown is a "Hero in Our Midst".

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org, and join the American Legion, our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US

Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 26 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊

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SUE PIAZZA's BOOK REVIEW

Magpie Murders by Anthony Horowitze

Published 2016 in Great Britain
Genre: Mystery, Fiction
Bookmarkers: 3 of 5

Prolific writer Anthony Horowitz created Foyle's War for PBS; wrote several Midsomer Murder episodes; penned the Hawthorne & Horowitz Series; wrote the bestseller Moriarty and the Alex Rider series (now on Amazon Prime); the international bestseller The House of Silk, James Bond 007 books, and more.

Reviewers have touted this book as a cleverly construed "who done it". I found this narrative confusing beginning with the "About the Author" section attributed to Alan Conway and not Anthony Horowitz. This book within a book even attributes reviews to Conway. Adding to the unclear delineation between are the two casts of characters, one for the manuscript Alan Conway wrote and a second cast dealing with a different murder investigation.

The plot revolves around Susan Ryeland who, as an employee at Cloverleaf Books publishing house, is the editor of "Magpie Murders" the latest work written by Alan Conwy, who has just died. Mystery #1, did he commit suicide? Mystery #2, what happened to the last chapter(s) of his manuscript?

The storyline Conway's novel is propelled by the death of Mary Blakiston, a break in and then another death, all which take place at the manor house of Sir Magnus Pye. Detective Atticus Pund is called in to investigate. Susan Ryeland edits this book. She then investigates the missing chapters and Conway's untimely death. This manuscript follows Alan's plotline, Susan investigates Conway's death. Mr. Pund reveals details into the manor investigation. Mr. Pund dies, his obituary is printed in The Times. The book goes back and forth between Susan and her investigation, the novel's mysteries she's editing and the circumstances surrounding Conway's death. All the back and forth between two different books tends to become confusing.

Mr. Conway's nine book titles comprise an anagram. Mr. Conway hated his creations and those who read them. He planned to reveal this on television. After insulting his readership his book's franchise would collapse. The planned BBC TV series based on his works would fall through. But he didn't care. He was dying. His publishing house, Cloverleaf, would take a severe financial hit. It might even go under. A good motive for his death. Ms. Ryland soon discovers this was not the only motive for his possible murder. Mr. Conway had a habit of including everyone he knew as characters in his work, and most were not described kindly.

A potential issue to some readers is that this book is written in English, not American English. Some of the words do not translate. Example: "… box of frozen fish lying next to the hob …" or "She told me that her brother's death had knocked her for six." or "… the bright pink motor scooter that she had bought on the never-never." It is easier to read this on a Kindle, this way one is able to click on an unfamiliar word and have its meaning come up immediately.

Another difference between English and American is the use of articles. "… left hospital …" The English do not add an article here. American grammar adds the article "the" to become "left the hospital" There are also no periods after Dr as in American English. Maybe this is a constant typo. Unsure.

An interesting habit of Mr. Horowitz is his mentioning other authors and their works as well as writings or its processes that may tangentially have something to do with the novel being read. Example: The importance of names. Originally called Sherrinford Holmes the detective's name was fortunately changed to Sherlock Holmes. Pansy O'Hara to Scarlett, etc. He also refers to elements in other books. Example: "A writer and a character he hated, both heading towards their Reichenbach Falls." This is a reference to Moriarty and Holmes' interaction at the falls.

This best-selling author is a master of words. His descriptions are melodious, fluid, and visually compelling. "He lives in the stately pile where he was brought squealing and mewling into the world, a damp, unlovely ball of poisonous mauve tearing open the curtain of his mother's vagina with the same violence with which he will rampage through the rest of his life." And again with "Her physique was against her too: not fat, not masculine, not dumpy, but perilously close to all three." Then there was this section where Detective Inspector Chubb speaks of knowing his wifie's mood when he returns home. "… she communicated it by the speed of her knitting needles."

I did enjoy this book once I listened to the audio tape and reread the book though I found that with this author's vast collection there are other of his works that I would recommend before this one. Almost any other of his novels are easier to read and more fulfilling than this one though if you can keep the characters and books straight you might enjoy this interesting format. Next month I will review one of his other novels, one I find immensely more enjoyable and easier to follow.

Recommend. Sort of.

Susan Piazza, a Navy veteran, is an author, columnist, and blogger. Book One in her historical Ongoing Indigenous Tale series "A Bird Call That Isn't," can be found on Amazon at:

A Bird Call That Isn't: An Ongoing Indigenous Tale ◊

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Dealing with Obesity

Dr. Pierre Ghassibi
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Greetings.

Obesity disturbs the hormonal system of the body . Hormones go everywhere and therefore the effect is everywhere . We see more :

Depression, clumsiness, migraines, diabetes, high BP, higher cholesterol and triglycerides, increased risk of cancers, acid reflux, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, irregular periods, decreased fertility, different skin rashes, asthma, retinal detachment, prostate issues, kidney stones, ED, heart diseases, lower immunity, poor self esteem , chronic fatigue.

Yet, we continue to be fixated on eating . We keep after our children to eat , we think thinness is a disease (at least some of us do) . We think rest is good , while it never cures anything. It is better to stay somewhat active even when we are sick .

We know that treating obesity is an impossible task . We get burned out trying . Fasting causes us to be more addicted to eating . The body gets used to a high Calorie intake and if we try to fast , we get headaches , nervousness, insomnia and restlessness. I will call this " relative hunger ".

There is no magic diet . Surgery and pills have side effects and work for a short time if there is no permanent shift in our relationship with food .

What I have seen work is very slow and very small decrease in the Calorie intake, small enough not to lead to the torture of relative hunger . It takes time for results.

P. Ghassibi, md
ghassibi@hotmail.com

TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

"Will Trent"

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Lots of the best TV Crimefighters have quirks about their personalities or methods that make them memorable. Columbo had his rumpled trench coat and his "One More Thing" persistence. Monk had his Obsessive Compulsive disorder that helped him solve cases. Those are just two of the more interesting ones.

Now, along comes 'Will Trent.' The quirky new procedural, based on Karin Slaughter's bestselling book series, stars the engaging Ramón Rodríguez as the title character, an intuitive Special Agent with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Will is one of those Holmes-like investigators who simply sees the world differently. His secret gifts are being ultra-observational and not by-the-book because, as we quickly learn, Will is dyslexic. He sharpened those gifts growing up with a rough childhood in the Atlanta foster care system and various group homes.

The series grabs your attention right from the start and is careful not to pack too much into the premiere and overload the viewers with too much information too fast. Instead, it takes its time, allowing Rodriguez to fill in the blanks on Will and show us what he is all about, both in his private and professional life. The two-part premiere episode gives the show the chance to progress more slowly and lets the viewers understand and learn about the main characters.

Among those characters are Atlanta police detective Angie Polaski (Erika Christensen), who has a history with Will. She spent years with him in foster care, and now 25 years later they are involved in an off and on romantic relationship which seems to be acceptable to the both of them.

Rounding out the fine ensemble cast are Sonja Sohn (The Wire) as Will's no-nonsense boss, Amanda; Iantha Richardson, as Faith, a smart young agent who's partnered with Will (he famously works alone … but not anymore); and Jake McLaughlin as Det. Michael Ormewood who, years before, had a drunken fling with Angie and his marriage is now hanging by a thread.

Rodríguez drives the series forward. Will is an interesting character, full of physical and psychological scars that inform everything he does — from his reluctant decision to adopt an adorable, abandoned chihuahua named Betty to his home in a rough neighborhood undergoing a renovation to his aforementioned relationship with Angie, which seems like necessary therapy for both of them. Christensen, frazzled and dangerously on edge throughout, is also a standout.

In the premiere, Will investigates a double-murder and a college-aged woman who was kidnapped. We soon learn that she's the daughter of a wealthy businessman who knows Will from their boyhoods growing up together in Georgia's foster care system, and helps us learn more about Will's childhood.

Like the cases he solves, 'Will Trent' keeps you guessing with mysteries that not only set up suspects but also examine evidence through the mind of a person with dyslexia.

While it's still the early days for the ABC series, the show seems to be off to a good start, and it will be intriguing to see if the show will stay the course. So far, it's a fun ride.

'Will Trent' airs Tuesday night at 10 pm on ABC, and is available to stream on Hulu.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◊

Speak Lord!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

God Bless you all in the Powerful Name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

When you read these words, "Speak Lord," what are your initial thoughts? Do you really think that it's available in 2023 for the Lord to speak? To speak to you? Yes, you!

Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me." NKJV. When you pray, which is simply having a conversation with God, do you ever wait and listen for a response? Which brings us right back to the original question, do you really think it's available for the Lord to speak to you in 2023?

I am reminded of a passage in the Bible when God called a young boy of 12 years old to be a Prophet. His name was Samuel and I am not going to share the entire story at this time, but you can go ahead and read it for yourselves in 1 Samuel Chapters 1-3. We do read the following in 1 Samuel 2:26, "And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men." NKJV. Next, we read in 1 Samuel 3:9, "… "Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears." NKJV. Samuel is only 12 years of age when the Lord spoke to him as he was ministering before Eli the Priest in the temple. I am going to unpack these words, "Speak Lord for your servant hears," for the remainder of this column.

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel had to go to a designated place, the tabernacle of meeting to hear God speak as it says in Exodus 29:42-46, "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. 44 So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God." NKJV. So, as we read, in order to hear God Speak they had to go to a special designated place.

In the New Testament, things changed! We read the following in John 14:16-18, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." NKJV. Then in John 16:13-15, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." NKJV.

Today as Christians we have the Holy Spirit in us forever!!! He never leaves us!!! Meaning you can't lose your salvation because your salvation is based upon the Perfect Finished Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The innocent one, Jesus, freely gave His life for us, the guilty ones! So, God speaks to us, those who are saved by Grace, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The designated place God speaks to us today is in our spirit which is in us.

Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross got rid of all and every middle man and anything that separated us from God! The Holy Spirit in us gives us direct access to the Throne Room of the Heart of God our Father. We read in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." NKJV. We are inseparable!!!

So, now that we have established that nothing is between God and us and that God speaks directly to us, let's be expectant to hear from Him. When we pray, or talk to Him, listen for His response! Just like young Samuel, our posture should be, "Speak Lord for your servant Hears!!!" My fellow Christians, are you listening??? He is speaking to you!!!

Can I share one more truth with you? We read in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:" NKJV. Also in Galatians 4:7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." KJV. Because You and I believe, we are no longer called servants but sons and daughters of God!!! We are Family!!! Our Heavenly Father Speaks to His Children!!!

In 2023, let's together make a pledge that when we talk to God, we will wait and listen for His response because going forward we will say, "Speak Lord for your child is listening"!!!

Love to all of you,
Peter Larocque
peterlarocque@hotmail.com ◊

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Property Sales, Foreclosures for Jan., 2023 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)

Northern Essex Registry of Deeds

M. Paul Iannuccillo, Register

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

Thanh T Tran, Vijay Kumar & Rakhee Menon, $1,670,000, 3 Country Club Ln

Ca Investments Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr, Sunil Kumar & Rekha Kumar, $1,600,000, 3 Robert Dr Unit 1-2

David A & Simone J Shrestinian Trs & David A Shrestinian & Simone J Shrestinian Revocable Trust, Qian Xu Tr & Lovebaby Trust, $1,425,000, 76 Woburn St

Peter J Beatty & Nancy Kendrick, Steven D Nguyen & Ann Ngo, $1,235,000, 8 Punchard Ave

Eunsang & Soonhae Yoon, Zheng Cao & Xiaoyan Zhang, $1,140,000, 1 Green Meadow Ln

Joseph D Nasta & Joseph R Nasta & Maria K Nasta, Sai Krishna & Soba Rani Mopuri, $999,000, 22 Brundrett Ave

William Wong & Nari Koga, Drew Nathanson & Margaret Nathanson, $925,000, 84 Cross St

Thomas M & Nicole H Peluso/Nichole H Peluso, Alexander & Natasha Groden, $892,000, 200 Chandler Rd

John M McCoy Jr Revocable Trust, Hasan Kaan Erdem, $800,000, 10 Evergreen Ln

Eric T & Valoree B Young Trs & Val Todd Trust, Gabriel Etienne Zentner & Elisabeth Michele Page, $789,000, 79 High Plain Rd

Challenge Unlimited Inc, Catherine Chepolis & Allison R Jackson, $710,000, 448 Lowell St

Kirsta Runge Tr/Kirsta Deschamps Tr & Wallace E Runge Jr Nominee Trust of 2016, Bridget Munnelly & Kevin Guiliano, $639,900, 7 Glenn Cove

FSB Homes LLC, Michael Pierce, $550,000, 9-11 Walnut Ave Unit B

Patrick Scanlon & Constance Scanlon, Shapiro Family Tr Kenneth Shapiro & Jean Heisterkamp-Shapiro Trs, $535,000, 14 Morton St

Lauren Uberti, Hagop Matossian, $525,000, 46 High St Unit 2

Cheryl A McPherson Tr & Cheryl A McPherson 2000 Revocable Trust, Monica Kwok, $500,000, 89 Chandler Rd

Karen Fox, Jibum & Mari Lee, $484,000, 9 Michael Way Unit 41

Melanie Smith, Thams Doucette Jr, $440,000, 81 Center St

Virginia E Ramsey, Jonathan Sothy Pen & Zachary Breland, $345,311, 6 Harding St

Alfred Flory, Justin Flory & Skye Stewart, $325,000, 400 Brookside Dr Unit E

Scott & Courtney Ago, Junjun & Mei Li, $320,000, 16 Balmoral St Unit 113

Jean M Serrano, Gordon L McAdams Jr, $300,000, 16 High Plain Rd

Anh T Nguyen & Trung H Duong, Bradley T & Katherine Castro Eardley, $265,000, 14 Longwood Dr

Eugene A Acheson, Tanina Bianchi, $265,000, 11 Crescent Dr Unit 8

LAWRENCE

Stonegate 5 Lake Street 2020 LLC, Lake End Realty LLC, $2,060,000, 5 Lake St

Salas Jordan Family LLC, Gods Good Co LLC, $1,180,000, 447-449 Essex St

Carla Salas Est & Antonia Salas, Cecilia Rosario, $670,000, 46 Chelmsford St

Daher Group Inc, Jailene & Fernando Quinonez, $599,900, 35 Chickering St

Ricky Victor Gonzalez, Kaprinsky Santiago, $589,000, 26-28 Crosby St

Santo B Valdez, Richelin Soto Ramirez & Jennifer Vittini Suazo, $550,000, 5 Wood Ln

Radhames Rodriguez, Netania Nunez-Vargas & Eladio Rosario, $505,000, 38-42 Bodwell St

Hilario Guerrero, Rosmy Monegro & Nanessa Guerrero, $500,000, 102-104 Butler St

Bachir Lib LLC, 486 Andover St LLC, $495,000, 486 Andover St

Tony Chanh Dang & Buoi Dang/Boui Le Dang, Victor Pena & Raymer Ernesto Pena Duval, $485,000, 44 Hamlet St

Karen Glendye, Jessiva Hovey & Jacob Darrow, $440,000, 23 Ames St

Luis & Lucy Medina AKA Lucy Quezada, Alexis Montano Baez & Emily B Montano, $430,000, 18 Kress St

Doris Ruby Rosinski & Steven Rosinski, Alex Espinal, $410,000, 10 Cleveland St

Ezequiel Gutierrez Lantigua & Yokasta Polanco De Gutierrez, Yissel Henriquez Gil & Ronny M Hernandez Bueno, $364,900, 57 Kingston St

Debra E Cunningham, Leonidas B Garcia & Bernarda A Burgos, $355,000, 45 Warren St

William J Welch III, Steven Ciambelli, $320,000, 26 Sparkle Dr

Francisco/Francesco & Yolanda Burgado, Esther Indiana Rodriguez Abreu, $305,000, 99 Jamaica St Unit 9

Paul C Moore, Ana Aquino, $290,000, 65 Inman St Unit B

Luis D Colon, Wilfredo Fontanez, $270,000, 28 Hamilton St Unit 1

US Bank NA Tr, Chloe LLC, $230,000, 144-146 Water St

Rick Son Tran, Home Realty Group LLC, $126,005, 180 Boxford St

QS Lending Trust & Steven Ross Tr, MS Contractor LLC, $112,000, 14 Saratoga St

METHUEN

Babak Sardashti, Elicer & Lisbeth Gomez, $1,300,000, 13-15 Ayers Village Rd

Yen-Ching Chen & Shih-San Alex Chen, Giulia A Day Tr & Day Family Emerald Pines Realty Trust, $870,000, 21 Pine Tree Dr Unit 99

Toll MA Land III LP, David D & Rita J Waters, $844,126, 1 Wren Way Unit 154

Toll Ma Land III LP, John Robert Jr & Michelle Lee Lincourt, $811,797, 3 Wren Way Unit 153

Toll Ma Land III LP, Eunsang & Soonhae Yoon, $799,995, 3 Dove Ln Unit 185

Robin & Robert Gillan, Jake & Stephanie Luis, $717,000, 430 Pelham St

Perrault Family LP, Raleigh Realty Tr & Kathleen A Hughes Tr, $715,000, 32 Pine St

Toll MA Land III LP, Michael Paul & Kelly Ann Zalenka, $694,995, 52 Phoebe St Unit 95

Oriolando Bettencourt Veiga, Tiffany & Joseph Luis, $673,000, 4 Mosca Ln

John C Anton, Hector J Mazariegos Barros, $625,000, 178 Broadway St

D A Dizazzo Realty Trust & Dora A Dizazzo Tr, Khisha Gillham, $615,000, 60 Marshall St

Denis J & Kathleen A Lebel, Elvin Antonio Herrera, $500,000, 15 Wintergreen Cir

Craig A Pisani, Alexander Antonio Santos & Melinda Marie Santos, $490,000, 10 Salem St

Lawrence & Patricia Retelle & Patricia Albrecht, Mary Ly & Loretta Diehl, $485,000, 29 Oneida St

Emily Bowab Trustee Emily Bowab Trust-2000, Cesar R & Alvaro & Nora Rivera, $470,000, 4 Westwood St

Kristen Lombardi, Abdelaiziz Kam & Rabab Machich, $450,000, 164 Jackson St

Stephen F Defeo / Stephen F Defeo Jr & Sheryl Ann Smith, Valeria Arias & Joseph Censullo II, $431,900, 25 Richard Ave

Barbara L Dion, Nicholas Barreto, $430,000, 47 Riverview Blv

New England Home Buyers LLC, Noemi Hoskins & Roman Vasquez, $425,000, 44 1/2 Oakland Ave

Christopher D Digaetano, Rosanna Vargas & Rashel Sariol, $417,000, 510 Jackson St

Anthony J & Barbara A DeFruscio Trs & DeFruscio 2016 Trust, Scarlyn Ortega Polanco & Aury Hilario De Javier, $410,000, 42 Albion St

Nicolle DelliColli, Richard G Daddio, $410,000, 1 Riverview Blv Unit 3-202

Norma J Lemay, Dylan James Murad & Ronald Paul Caddick, $399,500, 1 Riverview Blv Unit 1-006

Donna M Hewitt & Thomas M Peters Est, Wanda Warner, $390,000, 117 Howe St

Dana Willis, Mirlande Gassant & Gracia Guerrier, $380,000, 45 Washington St Unit K-52

John & Kristen Harding, John & Sarah Heim, $375,000, 5 Jeffrey St

Edward A Rainen, Andrea A Castillo De Osoria & Rey A Osoria Bernabel, $370,000, 31 Linwood Ave

Ana I & Gabriel Berrios, Frandy B Matos, $365,000, 108-110 Perry Ave

U S Bank Na Tr, Esthefanie Castillo, $351,000, 19 Blake St

Minichiello Family 2018 Revocable Trust & James E Minichiello Tr & Joanne McCormick Tr, 16 Stoneybrook Road LLC, $350,000, 16 Stoneybrook Rd

Juan C Capellan & Gina M Abreu, Andrei Nitescu, $325,000, 22-A Adelaide Ave Unit 22A

Mark A & Catherine A Haynes Revocable Trust, Sterling Antonio Checo & Bolivar R Cruz, $325,000, 94 Leroy Ave

Paul P & Linda M Boivin, Home Sweet Homes Solutions LLC, $265,000, 155 Woodburn Dr

Matthew P Whalen, Carolyn Summit, $257,500, 23 Hamshire Rd Unit 107

Carlos Humberto Pelaez, Rechdan Mystic Street Methuen LLC, $197,000, 71 Mystic St Unit 24

NORTH ANDOVER

Samuel M Mesiti Tr R Mesiti Family Trust, Matthew W Talis, $850,000, 526 Osgood St

Jeffrey Caird, Lauren L Bowen & Siddharth P Rawal, $835,000, 411 Stevens St

Betsy Nicoletti, David & Judith Lloyd, $815,000, 835 Chestnut St

Paul Alfred Olson Est & Dorine L Olson, Zhenyu Miao, $724,900, 160 Farnum St

Bank of America NA, North Andover Realty Ventures LLC, $700,000, 154 Main St

Eleanor A DiPaolo Est & Nancy R McLaughlin & Andrea J Savard, Lawrence & Christine W Allen, $677,500, 5 Beacon Hill Blv

Ajay Kumar & Namita P Kumar, Sean F & Devyn N Quinn, $644,000, 59 Jetwood St

Kelly K Doyle & Kenneth J Giaquinta, Adam Salemme & Samantha Dascanio, $630,000, 14 Colgate Dr

Detris Adelabu, Jianing Xiao, $630,000, 86 Compass Point Rd Unit C-4

Patricia & Joseph Nett, Kyle & Susan Hamill, $575,000, 1100 Salem St

Fontaine Family Trust Philip A Fontaine, Mohamed Ma Salem, $550,000, 58-60 May St

Ileana & Marius Micu, Neal Laurenza Jr & Chelsea Stearns, $416,000, 4 Andrew Cir

Donald Ellard & Barbara Ellard & William P Ellard Est & Paul F Ellard Est & Andrea K Ellard, Northshore Real Estate Solutions LLC, $415,000, 54 Summer St

Andrea M Barry, Jose Sanchez, $251,000, 72 Farrwood Ave Unit 27-FW-1

Hemant V Oturkar, Sutton Kre LLC, $230,000, 231 Sutton St Unit 2J

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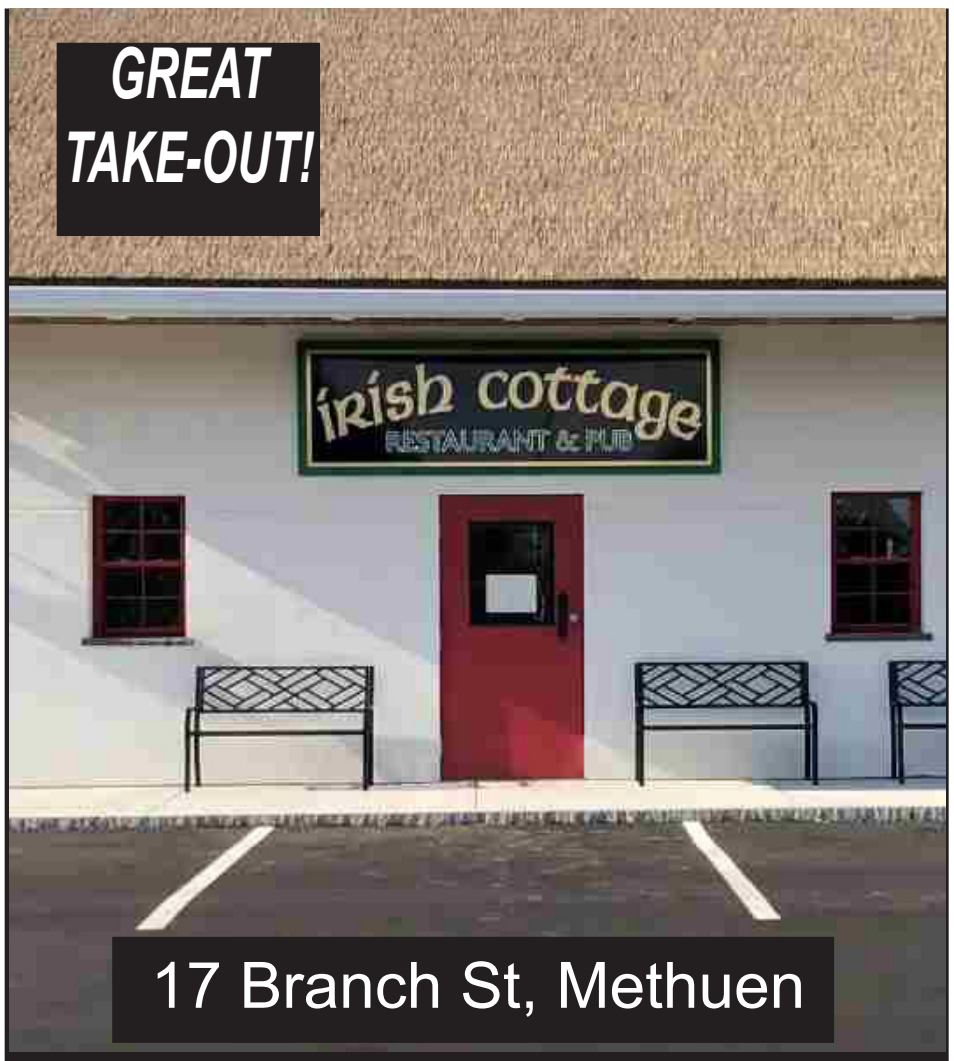

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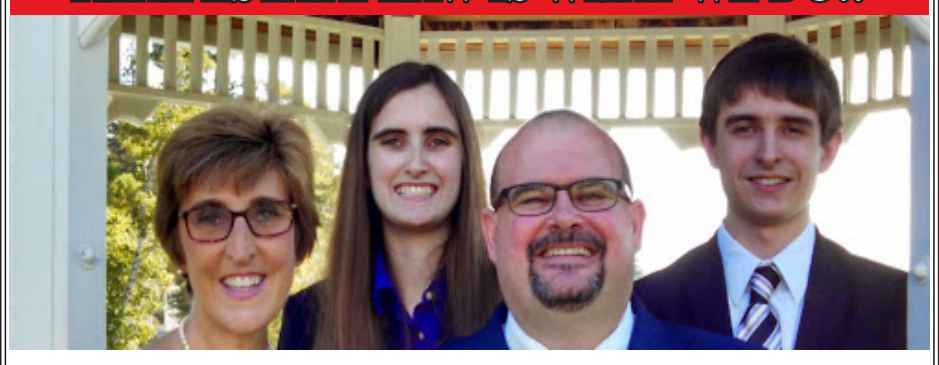

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YE GAY O'LE VALLEY: America is Becoming the Third Reich

Dani B. Langevin
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

What has been happening in America, past and present, concerns me very much. I see the U.S. heading down the Nuremberg path to destruction and dictatorship. America is looking more and more like Nazi Germany and we should all be concerned.

Prior to 1933, Germany enjoyed a multi-party republic just as we do here in America. Then came Hitler. By the end of that year, Hitler would become dictator, constitutional protections suspended, nationwide boycotts of Jewish goods and businesses instituted, Jews were prohibited from Civil Service jobs and "Un-German" books were burned. How does that compare to America? Shortly after Hitler's rise, the multi-party republic that the Germans had enjoyed, no longer existed. In the US, we have two political parties hell bent on destroying each other.

One major political party refuses to accept the results of a legitimate election and both parties only speak about what's "best for the party" and things that will or will not "get us elected or re-elected." They, like Hitler, are concerned with getting elected only and staying in power-only!

In April of 1933, a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses was issued. They had to be turned over to Aryan owners. Jews couldn't buy products from non-Jews and non-jews couldn't buy products from Jews. In America, many look the other way or stay silent when someone refuses to serve a gay couple who would like a wedding cake or simply serve them. How about those patrons who refuse to go to an LGBTQIA owned business or worse, order a large quantity of what the business makes and then refuse to pick it up or pay for it? It can be devastating to a business. Yet, very few people say a thing. Because it's, "Not my business." YET!

Jews were banned and fired from Civil Service jobs and education, from both teaching and being a student. Here in America, we forbid Black Americans an education, banned Chinese immigrants from entering the country for 60 years, imprisoned hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans during WWII, fired anyone suspected of being communist and/or gay from Civil Service jobs and education and, of course, there's the three hundred years of slavery simply because of the color of a person's skin. America was silent. One demographic in particular did little to nothing because it kept and keeps them in power.

In Germany, only 5 percent of students could be Jewish. For Jewish families, you either didn't go to school or hoped your parents could afford private school. Here in America females weren't allowed to go to higher education institutions, got fired if they got pregnant and couldn't play school sports. Let's not forget about the railroading of women and people of color when trying to get into college or a job they had the degree for or the centuries long ban of Black Americans from schools. Now, trans-Americans are being told they can't work, learn or play sports in many instances. Smacks of Nazi Germany to me.

The Third Reich sterilized over 400,000 undesirables. So hasn't America and we continue to do so. The Third Reich burned "Un-German" books. In America, there's a whole movement to ban books about sexuality or those that allude to an alternative lifestyle. Hitler imprisoned criminals indefinitely, even if they had served their allotted time. In America, Nixon's administration purposely and falsely got America to associate certain drugs with certain groups, filling our jails with non-violent black and brown people. Zero tolerance laws were passed, filling them more. White criminals seemed to be given a ",second chance," while Black criminals had to ",be taught a lesson."

In Nazi Germany, there was a call for "immediate and concrete segregation". Do I have to speak of the legal segregation that existed and still exists here in our country? On Kristallnacht, German soldiers destroyed synagogues, homes and businesses and killed 91 Jews. Nothing was done to stop it. In the good old US of A, we've had 300 years of killing Black enslaved peoples, the Chinese Massacre, Zoot Suit riots, Watts, Rodney King, people dying who are unarmed and uncountable mass shootings at schools. Nothing is being done because a certain demographic in America values their guns more than their children. Much like the Nazis valued power over people.

In America we talk of "National Security" and the "American Way" and if someone sees this threatened, they immediately go into attack mode, "That's un-American; they must be stopped, they must not be tolerated, they'll destroy the American way!" Germany had, "Laws for the protection of German blood and German honor." Sounds the same to me. And what made you a German? If two of your grandparents were Jewish, you were of mixed race and could enjoy many of the benefits of a full German citizen. If you had three or more Jewish grandparents, you were Jewish and screwed. In America, if they found one drop of African blood in your lineage, be it 2 years or 200 years ago, you're Black. Even Hitler felt America's formula was too harsh and went the grandparent route.

Jews couldn't vote. In America, anyone who didn't own land, have white skin or a penis couldn't. Today, black and brown people are still prevented from exercising their full voting rights. Still, little is done or said to change this fact. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews were forbidden and their marriages dissolved. In America, interracial marriages were illegal. Same sex marriages were illegal and there is still talk of turning that clock back. Inter-religious marriages were and still are discouraged.

German schools taught the superiority of Germans and the inferiority of Jews. Here in America, we are banning books and talk of alternative lifestyles. Big, burly, white men are threatening drag queen shows for children with violence. Which of those groups would do more damage? "Don't Say Gay," has become one state's mantra. The message is clear: Heterosexuals are superior to the LGBTQIA community who are inferior and we must teach our children that in order to rid America of them.

The changes under Hitler in Germany were swift and incremental. The incremental piece is what made it possible. Take a little away at a time and no one will notice until it's too late. Kind of like putting a frog in a pot of cold water and turning the heat up slowly. It'll be boiled before it notices the rising heat. In America, the changes are extremely slow but they're happening. Americans are being slowly corralled into proverbial concentration camps and they're not even aware of it happening except for the people doing the corralling. ◊

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